



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of Marketing  
Animal Industries and Consumer Services

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
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## Animal Health

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Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

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## Collection & Submission of Samples for Equine Neurologic Syndrome

**Criteria for Reporting:** All neurologic equine cases that are possibly infectious or contagious should be reported to the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5810 during business hours or to 410-841-5971 after hours and on the weekends. Primary differentials are Rabies, EHV-1 and Arboviruses during mosquito season. There is no charge to the owner of the horse for this testing. Testing supplies may be picked up from the Frederick Animal Health Laboratory (FAHL) or the Salisbury Animal Health Laboratory (SAHL) if the practitioner does not have them. **Samples are submitted to and tested at the Frederick Animal Health Laboratory at 1840 Rosemont Ave Frederick MD, 21702. Samples must arrive at the lab within 48 hours of collection. Samples must be received by 12 noon to assure same day results. CALL AHEAD of sample arrival.**

### Samples Required:

1. Lavender top tubes: 10-20 ml of blood in EDTA lavender top tubes (tubes must be in date).
2. Nasal Swabs: Two nasal swabs in MDA 2 ml normal saline tube:
  - i. **Tubes** provided by MDA contain 2 ml normal saline in an additive-free tube. If unavailable, place swabs in a red top tube (or equivalent) & cover tips with a small amount of saline. **Swabs submitted in other types of tubes or media may be rejected.**
  - ii. **Swabs** provided by MDA are sterile polyester-tipped swabs. If unavailable, swabs must be sterile synthetic or semi-synthetic. Calcium alginate or cotton swabs, as well as wooden sticks are **not acceptable & will be rejected.**
3. Red or Tiger Top Tubes: Submit serum samples (10-20 ml of blood) for potential arbovirus testing if EHV-1 is negative. Typically, arboviral surveillance season spans from July 1 to October 31. Free testing may not be available outside of this time period.

### Procedure:

1. Contact testing laboratory (FAHL – 301-600-1548) for scheduling purposes **before** collecting samples.
2. Collect blood via normal jugular venipuncture according to tube types & volumes described above.
3. Double swab (two swabs at once along the left or right ventral meatus, being careful to avoid the false nostril, until you are in the horse's nasal passage). Rotate the swab to increase the collection of respiratory secretions.
4. Place swabs in saline tubes as described above.
5. Label all tubes with Horse name, Owner's last name, date of collection, and any other relevant information.
6. Samples must be doubled bagged with absorbent material & wrapped with sufficient padding to assure ice packs do not cause the samples to freeze. **Frozen samples are unacceptable for testing.**
  - a. Packing & shipping should be done according to current requirements for biological specimens. **Send to the Frederick Animal Health Laboratory** via early a.m. overnight delivery. Hand delivery is also acceptable. **Samples are not routinely accepted on weekends or state holidays**, please discuss with MDA if shipping would land on a Friday or around a holiday.
7. Samples should **not be more than 48 hours old**. Samples should be submitted to the laboratory as soon as possible after collection.
8. Complete FAHL Services Request Form for EHV-1 testing at the Frederick Laboratory.
  - a. <http://mda.maryland.gov/AnimalHealth/Pages/laboratory.aspx>
9. Serum samples will require completion of a DHMH Maryland Equine Arbovirus Testing Form.
  - a. <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/laboratories/Pages/Arbovirus-and-Virus-Isolation.aspx>
9. Follow standard safety & biosecurity guidelines for EHV1 exposure.

Frederick Animal Health Laboratory - 1840 Rosemont Ave. Frederick, MD 21702 – (301) 600-1548 - **Supplies & TESTING**

Salisbury Animal Health Laboratory - 27722 Nanticoke Rd. Salisbury, MD 21801 – (410) 543-6610 - **Supplies ONLY**

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